CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date:	June 4, 2007
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Meeting Date:	June 28, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets

FROM: Director of Social Planning

SUBJECT: Community Services Grant - Report Back on Funding for Chinese Seniors

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve a Community Services Grant of $20,000 to the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre for outreach and support services to Chinese seniors in Strathcona and the Downtown Eastside for the period July 1 to December 31, 2007, source of funds being the 2007 Community Services Grants budget.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

Approval of a grant requires eight affirmative votes.

PURPOSE

This report recommends approval of a grant of $20,000 to the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre to support outreach and services to Chinese seniors in the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona areas. This grant is pro-rated for a partial year's funding to cover the period July 1 to December 31, 2007.

BACKGROUND

On April 3, 2007, and subsequently on May 3, 2007, Council did not approve a Community Services Grant to the Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA) to provide supports for Chinese-speaking seniors residing in buildings operated by DERA. Council instructed staff to seek an alternate service provider. A balance of $31,206 remains unallocated in the 2007 Community Services Grants budget for this service.

In a separate initiative in the Fall of 2006, Social Planning engaged a consultant to gather demographic information and information on currently available services, service gaps and issues affecting Chinese speaking seniors in the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona areas. Building managers, service providers and a limited number of seniors were included in the survey, which identified that there are 1,700 Chinese-speaking seniors living in 51 non-market, clan association and SRO buildings in these neighbourhoods.

The survey showed that while a considerable number of social/recreational programs are available, services providing outreach, information and support are in short supply. Since very few of the seniors speak any English, these outreach and support services are very important. The grant previously provided to DERA supported information and outreach to Chinese seniors in three of that Society's buildings. The only other regular outreach in the area is provided by the Chinese Community Library, which schedules limited support services to approximately ten residential buildings.

In view of this information, staff developed a call for proposals which invited outreach and support service proposals that, w. 'e giving priority to seniors in the three DERA buildings, would also consider provision of se. vices in additional buildings. The proposal call is attached as APPENDIX A.

DISCUSSION

An invitation for proposals was sent to eight local service providers, and proposals were received from five organizations, all of which currently provide services to Chinese seniors. While all of the proposals were thoughtful and indicated a strong interest within the community to see improved outreach and support to Chinese seniors, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre proposal best met the following criteria:

- the capacity of the applicant to provide the service;
- the applicant's approach to working with seniors (i.e. mandate, vision, objectives);
- the nature and scope of the proposed service;
- the proposed nature of supervision and support for the staff person within the organization;
- the applicant's plans for partnering with DERA to deliver services in the DERA buildings;
- the applicant's partnerships with other housing and service providers; and
- how the proposed services would connect with other seniors' services currently being provided by the applicant

The proposal from the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) met the above criteria in the most comprehensive way. The organization has a long-standing history of providing

services in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood, including currently providing health-related outreach services to some of the most vulnerable residents living in the area. It has a track record of employing Chinese-speaking staff and supporting elderly Chinese women, and has strong connections to a variety of services and organizations which work with both men and women in the local community. Also, very importantly, the DEWC has demonstrated its commitment to work with low income residents, both in providing services and in engagement and capacity building.

Some key components of the DEWC proposal include: further consultations with Chinese seniors on their needs and gaps in services, selecting appropriate buildings for targeted outreach, educational workshops in multiple locations, facilitated peer support sessions to promote group learning, and linking seniors to existing advocacy and related services.

Outreach and support services will be provided to the three DERA buildings and to several other buildings, and connections will be made with a number of other service providers. The DEWC will contribute both in-kind and cash support to the service, as well as soliciting in kind support from other partners.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Approval of the recommended grant of $20,000 will leave an unallocated balance of $11,206 in the 2007 Community Services Grants budget. In keeping with Council policy, this balance may only be used for unforeseen emergency requests from eligible Community Service organizations, during the course of the year.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recent survey of Chinese seniors and services in the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona areas shows a general lack of outreach, information and support services for Chinese-speaking seniors. Since virtually none of these seniors speaks English, bi-lingual supports which help connect these seniors to other services/activities are very important. In addition to concerns with language barriers, racism and discrimination were mentioned, particularly affecting the lowest income seniors. Some seniors said they did not know their rights to benefits and services, and did not feel entitled to ask. These and other survey findings suggest there is more work to be done to understand and support the connection of individual seniors to the broader community, and to support the interconnection of community services. It is hoped that this grant will contribute to the strengthening of these connections.

CONCLUSION

This report recommends a grant to the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre to provide outreach and support services to Chinese seniors in the Strathcona and Downtown Eastside Areas.

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Call for Proposals May 7, 2007

Outreach and support services for Chinese seniors in Strathcona/DES

Purpose:

The City of Vancouver, Social Planning Department, is inviting proposals from non-profit community groups to provide outreach and support services to Chinese seniors in the Strathcona/Downtown Eastside area of Vancouver. The purpose is to augment existing outreach and support services in this area, with priority given to the needs of Chinese seniors living in three buildings (Pendera, Tellier Towers and Solheim Place). Funding has been allocated in the 2007 Community Services Grants budget for this service and the recommended proposal will be submitted to Council, which must approve the grant.

Background:

The City has been providing an annual grant toward a four-day/week Seniors' Coordinator position to provide outreach and support to seniors living in three D.E.R.A. buildings: Tellier Towers, Pendera and Solheim Place. Council has instructed staff to seek a new non-profit society to provide this service.

Services/activities provided via this grant require translation and interpretation and have included information and referral, assistance with applying for various benefits, ESL classes, individual advocacy, educational workshops and individual and community capacity building.

Recent Research

Social Planning recently commissioned a demographic snap-shot and survey of services to Chinese-speaking seniors in Strathcona/DES. Community organizations providing services to Chinese seniors participated in the survey and contributed ideas regarding service gaps and improvements. Included in the findings were that:

- 51 non-market buildings and Single Room or Clan Association buildings house approximately 1,700 Chinese seniors;
- 88% of the seniors speak Cantonese (or a dialect); 12% speak Mandarin; almost none speak any English;
- a considerable number of recreation/leisure programs/activities are provided by various community agencies, but there is a lack of outreach to buildings where seniors live and a lack of information, individual advocacy and support with accessing benefits and services;
- economic and social barriers exist for the lowest income seniors in accessing community services.

Regular outreach and support services have been available in a limited number of buildings (the three D.E.R.A. buildings and 10 other residential buildings which have weekly outreach visits from the Chinese Community Library).

Given the findings of this recent research, Social Planning believes that while priority in this proposal call is given to seniors in Tellier, Pendera and Solheim Place, there is

an opportunity - and a need - to expand the scope outreach and support to include Chinese seniors in additional buildings.

Proposed Service

Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria for a City of Vancouver Community Services Grant.

Proposals should describe the following:

- What is your organizational capacity and your approach to working with Chinese seniors?
- Describe the nature and scope of the proposed service/activity - i.e. # hours per week; proposed services/activities; proposed number of buildings/number of seniors served; frequency of outreach; whether there is a drop-in component to a central office as well as outreach, etc.
- How do you plan to support this service/staff person within your organization?
- How will you partner with D.E.R.A. to provide services in the three D.E.R.A. buildings? (D.E.R.A. has indicated its willingness to work with applicants on this issue).
- How will you partner or work with other housing and service providers in the community?
- If you are already providing services to Chinese seniors, are there any linkages between existing services and the proposed service?

Budget

The grant for the proposed service will be for the period July to December of 2007, and in the range of $15,000- $20,000.

Proposals should indicate a possible start date, salary and benefits and program costs and any other sources of funding.

Community Services Grants Information

Please refer to the Social Planning website at www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/grants/commgrants.htm, for additional information on the Community Services grants criteria. This proposal is for the last six months of 2007. If interested, the organization would re-apply in December of 2007 for a full-year grant in the 2008 Community Services Grants program. All Community Services grants must be approved by Council annually.

Timing:

Proposals must be received in Social Planning on or before 4 pm, Thursday, May 24, 2007. Staff will review the proposals and report to Council before the end of June, for Council's decision.

Please call Anne Kloppenborg at 604-871-6031 or Baldwin Wong at 604-871-6637 with any questions about this proposal or for further information.